

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) A method for protecting the outer retinal layers ~~decreasing or treating retinopathy resulting from damage and/or degeneration of the outer retinal layers,~~ which comprises administering an effective amount of a full-length recombinant hepatocyte growth factor as an active ingredient to a patient in need thereof.

5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of parenterally administering hepatocyte growth factor.

8-9. (Cancelled)

10. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of administering hepatocyte growth factor in a form of an eye drop, an eye ointment, or an injection.

11-12. (Cancelled)